

MEMORANDUM: All NOAA Employees

FROM: R. J. Dominic  
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 01-1

The purpose of this advisory is to update you on the impact of recent terrorist attacks in the United States as it relates to official travel.

Travelers who are away from their duty stations and cannot return because of the airline disruption will be allowed leeway, with supervisory approval, in either staying at the temporary duty station until flights are resumed, or returning by alternative means; e.g., rail, bus, or one-way car rentals. Supervisors have the authority under these emergency conditions to authorize and fully reimburse employees for any alternative travel arrangements that are made. We understand that AMTRAK may accept airline tickets that were previously issued. In most cases, these alternative means and additional costs can be "post-approved" on the employee's travel voucher. If employees are concerned about proving liability or receiving Government rates when the date is past that authorized on the travel order, the order can be amended and faxed to the employee at their temporary duty location. Travelers should use their Citibank travel charge cards to pay for any additional costs incurred.

Some airports are being reopened and flights are being resumed. Reagan National Airport will remain closed until further notice. Priority will be given to those flights that were diverted on Tuesday to allow them to continue to their destinations. However, only those passengers on the original flights will be allowed to reboard. Those travelers that are at temporary duty locations and need to make reservations to return to their official stations should call their usual SATO travel reservation numbers during normal working hours (8:00 am-5:30 pm), and the after-hours SATO emergency service at 1-800-827-7777 only after normal working hours. Travelers can expect heavy call volumes, extended hold times, and increased time to handle their requests over the next several days. Although SATO will be striving diligently to get all stranded travelers where they need to be, the first available flights may be several days from now. Travelers with nonessential travel concerns (an itinerary that begins greater than 72 hours from the time of their call) should defer calling SATO until the immediate emergency situation is resolved.

Please note the following reservation guidelines:

- Travelers should contact SATO to cancel any reservations they might have made for future travel that will not occur. Be sure you've faxed travel orders to SATO for any reservations that will not be canceled.
- Travelers who have unused tickets for travel that was canceled this week should return the tickets to their issuing SATO office to obtain refunds.
- Travelers serviced by SATO's San Antonio Reservation Center who wish to cancel airline reservations for flights departing September 14, 15, 16, and 17<sup>th</sup> should e-mail Dee Mutter at the following address: [dmutter@hq.satotravel.com](mailto:dmutter@hq.satotravel.com). Please include traveler's name, dates of travel, and the record locator number (if possible). Transaction fees are not refundable.

Employees planning to travel abroad should consult their International Activities Office within their Line/Staff Office. Employees may consult the Consular Affairs Internet website <http://travel.state.gov> for additional information regarding announcements, travel warnings, consular information sheets, and regional travel brochures, or they may call the Department of State in Washington, D.C. at 202-647-5225 for recorded information.

For current information on airline operation, please visit [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov) and/or [www.virtuallythere.com](http://www.virtuallythere.com). For the latest guidance from the General Services Administration, please visit <http://policyworks.gov/travel>, and click on "Travel Advisory 3".

Please call Rachael Wivell or Pat Oliver in the NOAA Travel Office on (301) 413-3060 if you have any questions. For your information, we've included below some frequently asked questions and answers regarding airline operation from the Department of Commerce and the FAA website.

## **Frequently Asked Questions in Response to the Resumption of Commercial Air Service**

Sept. 13, 2001

### **Is there a schedule for when airlines will begin flying and airports will open?**

We are allowing airports to reopen and air carriers to begin flying as they are able to meet our new stringent security.

### **How will I know when my airport will reopen?**

There is a list of airports on our web site at <http://www.faa.gov> that have certified they can meet our new security standards and are ready to reopen. That list is growing minute by minute, so the best advice for passengers is to call their airport.

**How will I know when my airline is ready to fly?**

You should call the airline to see if they are ready to resume service and to see when you should arrive at the airport. Remember, you will need plenty of time to process through all the additional security we are requiring.

**Are foreign airlines flying into the United States?**

For now, foreign airlines are not being allowed to fly into the United States. Foreign carriers who are already in the United States and who meet the heightened security standards may depart.

**When should I arrive for my flight?**

Travelers should allow two hours (three for international travel) of additional time at the airport prior to their scheduled departure time to allow for additional security measures.

**What do I do if I have an electronic ticket?**

Travelers traveling on e-tickets should carry a copy of their invoice/itinerary with them for documentation. If they don't have a copy, they can get a replacement itinerary or a ticket printed at the airline ticket counter. Travelers can also print a copy of their itinerary from the website [www.virtuallythere.com](http://www.virtuallythere.com). They will have to have their record locator number which they can get from SATO.

**Will I be allowed to meet an arriving passenger at the gate?**

No one without a ticket will be allowed beyond the security checkpoint. Provisions will be made for parents who need to meet unaccompanied minors, for disabled persons and persons with special needs who need to be accompanied by healthcare assistants or guardians, and for medical personnel who need to respond to a medical emergency beyond the checkpoint.

**If I don't have a bag to check, do I need to check in at the ticket counter?**

If you already have a ticket, you may proceed through the security checkpoint to the gate.

**Are general aviation aircraft being allowed to fly now?**

For now, general aviation craft are still not allowed to fly. The Department of Transportation expects to have more information on the status of general aviation flights later today (Sept. 13).

### **Can I carry my pocket knife on board?**

No knives or cutting instruments of any size or material will be allowed in the aircraft cabin. Knives may be transported only in checked baggage. Airlines will no longer provide steak knives for on-board food service.

### **What new security will I notice at the airports?**

- There will be thorough searches of all airports and airplanes before passengers are allowed to enter and board aircraft.
- FAA has also announced possible plans to eliminate all carry-on luggage.
- Curbside check-in is prohibited. All passengers must go to the ticket counters to check-in. Check-in for flights from hotels or other locations will no longer be allowed. Checking bags at off-airport sites is prohibited. You may still use these sites to obtain boarding passes and seat assignments.
- Only ticketed passengers will be allowed through the security checkpoints.
- Vehicles parked near the airport will be closely monitored.
- You may notice additional uniformed law enforcement officers and FAA canine teams patrolling the airport.

### **Will armed officers be put on flights?**

Yes, FAA Federal Air Marshals who are armed and trained in the use of firearms on board aircraft will be flying anonymously. Federal Air Marshals are FAA civil aviation security specialists who are specially trained for deployment on anti-hijacking missions. The FAA will not reveal the number or identities of the marshals. The DOT is working with the Department of Defense to see if other highly trained agents may be deployed to augment the Federal Air Marshal force.

### **Will the government be taking over the security screener workforce?**

We are looking at every aspect of security now for possible improvements. The FAA already has a rule pending expected to go final this month that will give the agency direct oversight of screening companies and impose new rigorous standards for training and testing of screeners. The rule will also require the use of new software FAA is deploying that will monitor how well each screener is doing at detecting dangerous objects. Under the new rule, screening companies whose screeners fail to meet FAA detection standards can lose their FAA certification to perform security at the airports.

### **Are you going to require hijacking training for pilots and flight attendants?**

We already require the entire flight crew to undergo initial hijacking training, and annual recurrent training. We do not detail what this training encompasses for obvious security reasons. Whether this training will change in any way, we don't know at this time, but we're looking at everything for lessons we can learn.